

EASTERN HEALTH BOARD

Minutes of proceedings of monthly meeting
of the Eastern Health Board held in the Boardroom
St Brendan's Hospital
on Thursday, 4 March 1982 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Dr J Behan
Cllr L Beton
Mrs B Bonar
Cllr D Browne
Cllr M Carroll
Cllr E Doyle
Ald A FitzGerald TD
Cllr M Freehill
Cllr Mrs A Glenn
Cllr A Groome
Cllr T Hand
Dr K Harrington
Cllr P Hickey
Cllr F Hynes

Dr D G Kelly
Cllr T Leonard
Dr P McCarthy
Sr Columba McNamara
Mr M Matthews
Dr A Meade
Dr B Powell
Cllr H Reilly
Dr B Sheehan
Cllr J Sweeney
Cllr G Timmins TD
Dr J Walker
Cllr W Willoughby

APOLOGIES

Prof J S Doyle

IN THE CHAIR

Cllr Dan Browne

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr PB Segrave
Mr F J Donohue
Mr T Keyes
Mr K Hickey
Mr J Reynolds
Mr P I Lyons
Mr L Kavanagh
Prof B O'Donnell
Mr PJ Swords
Mr FJ McCullough
Mr J Doyle
Prof I Browne

Miss A Flanagan
Mr K Ward
Mr T Brady
Mr M O'Connor
Mr M Cummins
Mr J Leech
Miss P Curtin
Miss M Rice
Miss T Downes
Miss E Larkin
Miss B Kelly

23/82 CONDOLENCE

The Chairman informed the members of the recent death of Mai Keogh, former Matron of St Brigid's Home, Crooksling. The members stood in silence as a mark of respect.

24/82

CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

- (i) The Chairman informed the members of the retirement of Mr PI Lyons, the Board's Personnel Officer for the past three years. He paid tribute to Mr Lyons in respect of his services to the Board and, on his own behalf, and on behalf of the members, wished him a long and contented retirement.
- (ii) The Chairman welcomed Mr Liam Kavanagh who had taken up duty as Personnel Officer on 2 March 1982.
- (iii) The Chairman informed the members that a special meeting of the Board would be held at 6.00 pm on Thursday, 18 March 1982 during which Mr W Bermingham, founder of ALONE, would address the members.

25/82

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of the monthly meeting held on 4 February 1982, having been circulated, were confirmed on a proposal by Cllr Sweeney, seconded by Cllr Hynes.

26/82

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Cllr Reilly requested permission to have Standing Orders suspended to allow a debate to take place on the introduction by the Board of means testing in the supply of drugs, aids and medicines and this was agreed. Following a discussion to which Cllrs Reilly, Freehill, Hickey, Hand, Hynes and Dr Behan contributed, in which the members expressed their opposition to the introduction (if means testing and to which Mr Donohue replied, it was noted that Cllr Freehill had tabled a motion on this subject for the April meeting of the Board.

27/82

PROCEEDINGS OF VISITING COMMITTEES

The report of the Community Care Visiting Committee meeting held in Area 1 (Dun Laoghaire) on 6 January 1982, on a proposal by Cllr Carroll, seconded by Dr Harrington, was noted. It was agreed that a report on accommodation for the community care team would be submitted to the next meeting of the Health Board.

2 KF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

The Chief Executive Officer read the following report which was noted by the Board

(i) Report No 7/1982

At our last Board meeting I circulated to our members the Department of Health letter dated 27 January 1982. advising the Board that the Minister had approved an allocation of £11 2.9m to cover the non-capital expenditure incurred directly by our Board on health services in 1982.

I informed the Board that this allocation was £7.5m short of the £1 20.4m which the Board's Management Team considered was necessary to maintain our existing services at their current level.

I should emphasise that our estimate of our requirements for 1982 was worked out by the Board's officers in the full realisation of the present economic circumstances and our estimate of £120.4m, therefore, represented our Board's minimum requirements. We were aware that to maintain our expenditure at this level we would have to make appreciable economies in the running of the service. I am happy to state that we have received cooperation from our staff who have adopted a constructive approach to meeting the difficulties which we all face in providing services and with particular reference to those most at risk in our area.

The problem now facing the Board is to determine how an admittedly restricted budget of £1 20.4m can be cut by a further £7.5m to the level of the allocation of £1 12.9m.

It was estimated by the Department of Health that approximately £4m could be found by measures which might be taken by the Department.

These were:

I	Adjustments in the Refund Medicines Scheme	£1.9m
II	Reduction of subvention rates in respect of private hospitals, nursing and maternity homes and private psychiatric hospitals	£1 -6m
III	Increase charges on long stay paying patients	£0.5m
	Total	£4.0m

I should point out that we have been given no details as yet of the proposed change in the Refund of Medicine Scheme and I can only comment that any such change will have to be quite drastic if it is to realise the expected savings.

The reduction in the subvention rates referred to above is already causing some anxiety. We have been notified by some institutions that they cannot afford to maintain patients on the reduced subvention rate and that in these circumstances they will have no option but to discharge some patients. The likelihood is that these patients, particularly those who are very old or mentally ill, may have to be admitted to our hospitals. Thus the savings envisaged in financing voluntary institutions may be negative by the increased costs to our own services.

Even allowing that the Department measures will result in a saving of £4m there remains a further £3.5m which has to be cut back. This can only be done by cutting back on our existing services. Such a step involves a number of fundamental policy issues which must be considered.

1. With the exception of the relatively small hospitals at Loughlinstown and Naas our Board has no acute general hospitals. The Department of Health letter of 27 January 1982 thus presents us with a very major dilemma: we cannot ensure that the limits of the expenditure allocation will be observed and at the same time "have special regard to priority areas of expenditure comprehended within the provision made for community care services, the mentally ill and the handicapped, the aged, maternity and children".

If cuts must be made, it is these very services which will be affected.

2. Many of the Board's services are at a level where any significant reduction in them would raise fundamental statutory questions. I have in mind particularly our psychiatric services where our facilities are already overcrowded and a further significant limitation of resources would force us to

(i) limit the admission of persons who are ill

(ii) discharge patients who are not capable of coping in the community,
or

(iii) add to the already overcrowded conditions in our hospitals.

Experience shows that any curtailment of resources for psychiatric care leads to overcrowding and a reversion to nineteenth century standards of custodial care.

These considerations apply with equal force to our mental handicap service.

3. Our facilities for the aged are extremely limited and operate in the face of continuing and increased demand for places. As I mentioned already the drastic cut in subvention rates must have the effect of making this demand even greater. Here again much of our building stock is of poor condition. In some instances, we continue to house patients in galvanised iron units.

However, if savings of the magnitude under consideration are to be achieved, options of the following nature face our Board: -

General Hospitals Programme	£
No further admission to our geriatric hospitals.	
Closure of some wards for three summer months.	1.145,000
Decrease grant to voluntary organisations.	
More stringent assessment of long stay patients.	
 Special Hospital Programme	
Closure of Therapy Unit. Central Mental Hospital.	
Closure of five wards in psychiatric hospitals.	1,155,000
Closure of unit for persons of no fixed abode.	
Reduce grants to voluntary bodies.	
 Community Care Programme	
Terminate Ad Hoc Dental Scheme.	300,000
Terminate Ophthalmic Scheme.	250,000
Reduce Section 65 Grants.	250,000
Apply more stringent criteria to assessment of applicants for disabled persons allowances.	300,000
Restrict placement of children in residential care.	100,000 1,200,000
TOTAL	3,500,000

These extreme measures which would involve a reduction or elimination of services, a reduction in staff would of course have to be discussed with clinicians and with staff representatives.

I should point out again, however, that these measures are illustrative of the significant level of action which is required given the level of cut-back and the important fact that we are already two months into 1982.

There is also the extreme difficulty of suddenly putting into effect unplanned, major cut-backs in an already over-stretched service catering for an ever increasing dependant population.

We are aware that our Board members too will be extremely concerned that the measures to be taken pose the danger of significant damage being done to the fabric of our services and to the morale of our staff.

Nevertheless, I must advise the Board that in the almost impossibly difficult situation which we face if the allocation is not increased these are the kind of options open to the Board.

Following a discussion to which the Chairman, Or Behan, Cllr Mrs Glenn, Cllr Sweeney, Mrs Bonar, Or Sheehan, Cllr Doyle, Sr Columba, Or Meade, Cllrs Reilly, Freehill, Hynes, Hand and Dr Kelly contributed, it was agreed that an immediate meeting should be sought with the Minister for Health which would be attended by the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer and that a Committee Meeting of the Whole House should be held on Thursday, 18 March 1982 at 7.00 pm to enable the members to consider the action to be taken to deal with the reduction of an already restricted budget of £ 120.4m to the level of allocation of £112.9m.

(ii) Committee on Children Sleeping Rough

In December 1977 our Board, in response to an invitation from Dublin City Council, agreed to participate with that Council in the formation of a Committee on Children Sleeping Rough and adopted the following resolution:

'That a Special Committee be set up consisting of members of the Eastern Health Board and Dublin Corporation to seek ways and means of coping with the problem of children sleeping rough in the Dublin area.'

The Committee has not met for some time. However, Dublin Corporation has written to us suggesting that the Committee be re-convened.

Our records indicate that the following eight persons were the Board's nominees to the Committee when it last met:

Alderman A FitzGerald
 Councillor J Connolly
 Councillor J Durning
 Councillor T Leonard, PC
 Dr J D Behan
 Mr H Corrigan, FPSI
 Ms N Kearney
 Dr B Powell

As Mr Corrigan, Cllr Connolly and the late Mr Durning are not now members of our Board it will be necessary for our Board, if it wishes to continue to participate, to recommend three new members to the Committee.

Our Board is also asked to agree to continue the nomination of Dr P McCarthy as an Advisor to the Committee.

The following members were nominated to be members of the Committee:

Cllrs Hand, Barton, Browne, Reilly and Mrs Bonar.

(iii) The Minister for Health has appointed Mr F J Donohue, Programme Manager, Community Care as a member of the Dental Hospital Board with effect from 4 March 1982 for the period ending 31 December 1983

(iv) The Minister for Health has recently made regulations increasing from the 1 March 1982 the fees payable by the public to Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages. A copy of letter dated 24 February 1982 from the Department of Health in this matter has been circulated to each member.

(v) There is a vacancy in the Dublin County Local Committee caused by the resignation of Miss D Fitzsimons, Public Health Nurse. Arrangements are being made to replace Miss Fitzsimons under the relevant regulations and a proposal will be submitted to the Board in this regard at the April meeting.

(vi) Members will have received two letters from the Secretary/Manager of the James Connolly Memorial Hospital, Blanchardstown, one of which has been circulated with the agenda and the other, dated 2 March 1982, which has been circulated this evening. Both letters relate to the establishment and membership of the Board of the James Connolly Memorial Hospital.

On a proposal by Cllr Carroll, seconded by Cllr Hand, it was agreed that Mr J J Nolan and Mr F Elliott be reelected as members of the Board of the James Connolly Memorial Hospital.

(vii) Our Board by agreement dated 22 September 1980 leased a site at St James's Hospital, Dublin to the Biological and Medical Research Institute.

We have now received a request from that Institute requesting our Board's agreement to effect the transfer of the rights and interests enjoyed under the lease by that Institute to the Institute of Clinical Pharmacology which, it is indicated, will, in 1982, become the owners and operators of the BMRI's facilities in Dublin.

The relevant clause in the agreement for lease is as follows:

'The Institute shall not assign sub-let or part with possession of the premises (including the buildings erected thereon) or any part thereof save to an accredited successor in title to the Institute and with the consent of the Health Board.'

I am having the request examined with a view to its consideration by the Board at the April meeting.

(viii) Consultant Posts - Naas Hospital

Our Board has applied to Comhairle na nOspideal for a number of new consultant posts at Naas Hospital. In this regard the applications subcommittee of Comhairle will visit Naas Hospital on Friday, 12 March 1982 at 10.00 a.m.

(ix) Care of the Aged

We have already advised the Board of an allocation of £70,000 which we have received from the Minister for Health based on funds from the Employment Guarantee Fund which has the dual objective of providing employment while improving the living conditions of persons in need, particularly the elderly.

Similar personal services for the elderly such as the Home Help service are provided in the main through voluntary organisations, and we are extending this concept through the co-operation of ANCO, the Department of Labour, Department of the Environment and the St Vincent de Paul Society. I am pleased to advise the Board of the co-operation we are receiving from these bodies and will keep the Board informed of further progress in due course.

(x) Site at St James's Hospital

I have circulated to the members a letter from Professor Howie regarding developments on the Board's property at St James's Hospital.

As I understand our Board's policy, it is our intention to facilitate the development of a major general hospital on that campus.

At the same time it is necessary for our Board to be assured of suitable accommodation for members and staff.

Against this background and the background of earlier arrangements for the re-location of our main offices in due course I have raised the matter with officers of the Department of Health and a meeting is arranged for later this month.

I shall advise the Board of developments.

29/82

DISPOSAL OF LAND AT ST MARY'S HOSPITAL, PHOENIX PARK

The following report no. 4/1982 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted.

The Board holds the premises and grounds of St Mary's Hospital, Phoenix Park from the Minister for Finance on a 99 year lease dating from 1948 and subject to payment of an annual rent of £2,600.

In 1967 the Dublin Health Authority approved of the granting of a sublease to the Cheshire Foundation in Ireland on an area of 4.2 acres at a nominal rent of £ 10 per annum over and above rates and taxes for the residue of the 99 years. The Minister for Health consented to the disposal as proposed. The Cara Cheshire Home has since been built on the site.

The Foundation has now indicated that the Cara Home wishes to widen its scope to embrace a residential home for severely disabled, a transition unit for residents who, following a period in a supported situation, could then probably manage outside the Home, and a day centre for disabled adults.

An application has been received from the Foundation for an additional area of ground (0.462 acres) adjoining the rear of existing site to enable them to provide the necessary buildings. The area required will not interfere with the amenities of St Mary's Hospital and the particular piece of ground is not required for any developments at the Hospital.

The Commissioners of Public Works, as Agents of the Minister for Finance, approved of the 1967 sublease and an application for approval will be sent to them for this additional area.

I recommend that the Board approve of the granting of a sublease to the Cheshire Foundation in Ireland on an additional area of 0.462 acres for the residue of the period still to run on the Board's 99 year lease; this additional sublease to be subject to the same conditions as the existing sublease granted to the Foundation in 1967 on the 4.2 acres and also at a nominal rent of £10 per annum.

This Report is submitted in accordance with the requirements of Section 83 of the Local Government Act, 1946. Section 83 provides that at the first meeting of the Board held after the expiration of ten clear days from the date of circulation of this Report the Board may resolve that the disposal, as proposed, shall not be carried out or that it shall be carried out in accordance with terms specified in the resolution.

If the Board resolves that the disposal shall not be carried out, it shall not be carried out. If, on the other hand, the Board does not pass a resolution as to the manner in which the disposal shall be carried out the disposal may, with the consent of the Minister for Health, be carried out in the manner set out above.

On a proposal by Dr Behan seconded by Dr McCarthy it was agreed that the proposal contained in the report be approved.

30/1982

APPLICATION BY DOCTOR JOSEPH T O'NEILL, ATHY
LODGE, ATHY, CO KILDARE TO EMPLOY A PARTNER

The following report no. 5/1982 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted.

"Doctor Joseph T O'Neill. Athy Lodge. Athy, Co Kildare is participating in the Board's General Practitioner Service. He has a large list of eligible persons and his practice premises is at Athy Lodge, Athy, Co. Kildare.

In his letter of the 26 July 1981 he expressed a wish to employ a partner.

In accordance with paragraph 21'22 of the circular letter 8/75 dated the 9 April 1975 issued by the Department of Health, the Irish Medical Association and the Medical Union were asked for their observations on Doctor O'Neill's request. In letters dated 2 October 1981 and 14 October 1981 the Medical Union and the Irish Medical Association respectively stated that they had no objection to Doctor O'Neill's proposal.

I recommend, subject to the approval of the Board, that Doctor O'Neill's request be approved and that a partner for him be selected in accordance with the procedure laid down in paragraphs 21/22 of the Department's circular letter 8/75 dated 9 April 1975.

The relevant extract from this letter is as follows:

21. The creation of a position as partner, or as an additional member of a group practice, or as an assistant with a view to partnership for the purpose of the general medical service, will be subject to the approval of the Health Board. In considering any such proposal the Board shall have regard to the total practice of the applicant.

Before giving approval the Board must be satisfied:

(a) that the creation of the position is preferable to the creation of an additional position which could be filled by open competition in the normal way; and

(b) that the creation of the position will not result in the admission of a particular person into the general medical service while other equally well or better qualified persons are not given a reasonable chance to compete. Where the Chief Executive Officer proposes to seek the approval of the Board to the creation of a position as partner, or as an additional member of a group practice, or as an assistant with a view to partnership he shall, before doing so, consult the medical organisations.

22. Where a Health Board agrees to the creation of a partnership or an addition to a group practice or to the recruitment of an assistant with a view to partnership the position will be advertised in the normal way but the doctor or doctors involved or a nominee of the doctor or doctors involved in the proposed taking in of a partner, or additional member or assistant will be entitled to sit on the selection board. The selection board shall pay due regard to any objection of this representative to the giving of the post to a particular individual or individuals. If the Board considers it desirable it may not recommend any candidate for appointment."

On a proposal by Dr Walker seconded by Dr Harrington the proposal contained in the report was approved.

31/82

TEMPORARY BORROWING

The following report no. 6/1982 from the Chief Executive Officer was submitted

"At meeting held on 3 December 1981 the Board consented to the temporary borrowing by way of overdraft up to an overall limit of £1.5 million during the quarter ending 31 March 1982.

It is considered that similar overdraft accommodation may be required during the June quarter 1982.

Accordingly, I request that the Board consents to borrowing by way of overdraft during the three months to 30 June 1982 up to a maximum of £1.5 million."

On a proposal by Cllr Carroll seconded by Cllr Sweeney the proposal contained in the report was approved.

32/82

**REPORT OF BOARD COMMITTEE ON SUPPORT SYSTEMS
FOR UNWANTED PREGNANCIES**

It was agreed that this item should be placed on the Agenda for the April meeting of the Board.

33/82

**APPOINTMENT OF NOMINEE TO IRISH PUBLIC BODIES
MUTUAL INSURANCES LTD.**

It was agreed that Cllr Carroll be nominated to represent the Board at meetings of the Irish Public Bodies Mutual Insurances Ltd.

34/82

PROCEEDINGS OF LOCAL COMMITTEES

The reports of the following Local Committees, having been circulated, were dealt with as follows:

(i) Dun Laoghaire Local Committee meeting held on 19 January 1982.

On a proposal by Cllr Sweeney, seconded by Cllr Freehill, the report was noted.

(ii) Wicklow Local Committee meeting held on 22 January 1982.

On a proposal by Cllr Hynes, seconded by Cllr Sweeney, the report was noted.

(iii) Kildare Local Committee meeting held on 28 January 1982.

On a proposal by Cllr Groome, seconded by Cllr Hickey, the report was noted.

35/82 CORRESPONDENCE

(i) Letter dated 29 January 1982 from the Secretary/Manager, James Connolly Memorial Hospital, Blanchardstown regarding the constitution of the James Connolly Memorial Hospital Board was noted.

(ii) Circular 4/1982 dated 15 February, 1982 from the Department of Health regarding additional resources for Pre-School Services was noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.30 pm.

**CORRECT: PB Segrave
Chief Executive Officer**

CHAIRMAN